

Message Text

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BELGRADE FOR USDEL CSCE

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: CSCE, NATO

SUBJECT: CSCE/CBMS - ALLIED AND SOVIET NAVAL ACTIVITY
IN MEDITERRANEAN AND BLACK SEAS

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REFS: (A) BELGRADE 7975 (B) BELGRADE 7613 (C) BELGRADE
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1. THIS MESSAGE RESPONDS TO DELEGATION REQUEST (REFTEL A)
FOR INFORMATION ON U.S. AND SOVIET NAVAL ACTIVITIES
IN THE MEDITERRANEAN IN CONNECTION WITH THE ROMANIAN

(REFTEL B) AND NNA (REFTEL C) INITIATIVES CONCERNING NAVAL AND AIR MANEUVERS AND THOSE "NEAR TERRITORIAL WATERS". GENERAL GUIDANCE ON CBMS IS CONTAINED IN REFTEL D; SPECIFIC GUIDANCE CONCERNING THE ROMANIAN AND NNA INITIATIVES IS BEING FORWARDED IN SEPTELS.

2. ALTHOUGH THE SOVIET PRESENCE IS CONSIDERABLE, WE CAN AGREE WITH THE DELEGATION'S OBSERVATION THAT THE U.S. NAVAL PRESENCE IS THE "MOST SUBSTANTIVE"

IN THE MEDITERRANEAN FOR THE YUGOSLAVS AND MANY OTHER CSCE PARTICIPANTS. WE WOULD SUGGEST, HOWEVER, THAT THE FRENCH, IF NOT THE ITALIANS ALSO, WOULD HAVE AT LEAST AS

GREAT A DESIRE AS WE TO AVOID DISCUSSION AND THAT THEREFORE THE BURDEN OF OPPOSING THE NNA AND ROMANIAN INITIATIVE WOULD NOT FALL ALONE ON THE U.S.

DELEGATION SHOULD SEEK TO INVOLVE THESE ALLIES IF IT HAS NOT DONE SO ALREADY.

3. IN ADDITION, THE ORDER OF BATTLE OF OUR NAVY IN THE AREA AND U.S. NAVY DEPLOYMENT PRACTICE ARE NOT APPROPRIATE SUBJECTS FOR DEBATE IN THE BELGRADE CSCE FORUM. THE DELEGATION, AND OTHER ALLIES, SHOULD SEEK TO AVOID DISCUSSION OF THE ALLIED NAVAL
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PRESENCE IN THE MEDITERRANEAN AND BLACK SEAS. WE RECOGNIZE, HOWEVER, THAT SUCH MAY BE DIFFICULT WITHOUT AFFRONT TO THE ROMANIANS AND NNAS. IF REQUIRED IN DISCOURAGING DISCUSSION, DELEGATION MAY STATE:

--DISCUSSION OF NAVAL ACTIVITIES IN THE MEDITERRANEAN AND BLACK SEAS IS A MATTER AFFECTING NATIONAL FLEXIBILITY AND PREPAREDNESS.

--U.S. HAS NOT INCREASED THE SIZE, SCOPE OR NATURE OF ITS NAVAL PRESENCE IN THE AREA SINCE THE TIME OF THE SIGNING OF THE HELSINKI FINAL ACT.

4. THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION ON SOVIET AND U.S. NAVAL ACTIVITIES IN THE MEDITERRANEAN AND BLACK SEAS IS FOR THE BACKGROUND INFORMATION OF U.S. AND ALLIED DELEGATIONS ONLY:

A. SOVIET NAVAL ACTIVITIES

OVERALL, SOVIET NAVAL DEPLOYMENTS IN THE MEDITERRANEAN

AND BLACK SEAS HAVE REMAINED FAIRLY CONSTANT SINCE 1975. SOME REDUCTION IN SOVIET SUBMARINE STRENGTH HAS TAKEN PLACE IN THE MEDITERRANEAN, PROBABLY DUE TO LOSS OF ALEXANDRIA AS A REPAIR FACILITY IN APRIL 1976. MOST SOVIET NAVAL MOVEMENTS CONSIST OF ROUTINE MOVEMENTS BETWEEN VARIOUS ANCHORAGE LOCATIONS, DURING WHICH LOW-LEVEL TRAINING EXERCISES ARE FREQUENTLY CONDUCTED. ALTHOUGH THE SOVIET MEDITERRANEAN FLEET NORMALLY DOES NOT OPERATE IN THE ADRIATIC, THE USSR HAS AN AGREEMENT WITH YUGOSLAVIA FOR MAINTENANCE AT TIVAT. THE AGREEMENT ALLOWS THE SOVIETS TO KEEP TWO VESSELS IN PORT FOR MAINTENANCE

AT ANY ONE TIME. THE SOVIETS UTILIZE THE BLACK SEA
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AS A MAJOR SOVIET NAVAL TRAINING AREA IN WHICH LARGE AND SMALL TRAINING EXERCISES TAKE PLACE THROUGHOUT THE YEAR.

B. U.S. NAVAL ACTIVITIES

THE SIXTH FLEET AND ITS ASSOCIATED ELEMENTS REMAIN IN A CONTINUOUS STATE OF READINESS, OF WHICH MOBILITY IS AN INTEGRAL PART. ROUTINE NAVAL OPERATIONS IN THE ADRIATIC HAVE BEEN IN CONJUNCTION WITH TRANSITS TO PORT VISITS IN YUGOSLAVIA AND ITALY. U.S. NAVAL VISITS TO THE BLACK SEA HAVE BEEN LIMITED TO A MINIMAL EXERCISE OF MONTREUX CONVENTION RIGHTS.

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